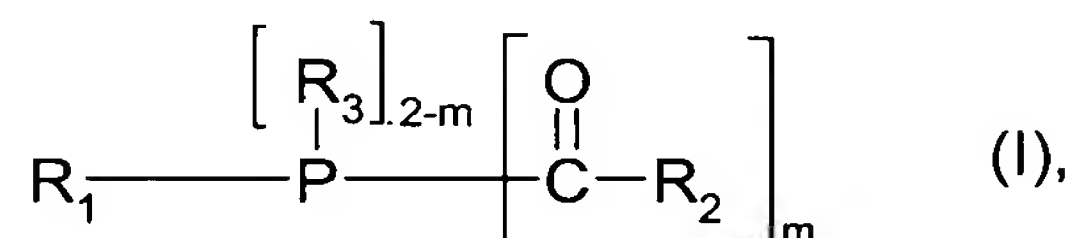


IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of acylphosphines of formula (I)



wherein

m is 1 or 2;

R₁ is C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₂-C₁₈ alkyl which is interrupted by one or several non-successive O atoms, phenyl substituted C₁-C₄ alkyl, C₂-C₈ alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, or C₅-C₁₂ cycloalkyl ~~or a 5- or 6-membered O, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring~~, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, or C₅-C₁₂ cycloalkyl ~~or the 5- or 6-membered O, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring~~ being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C₁-C₈ alkyl, C₁-C₈ alkylthio and/or C₁-C₈ alkoxy;

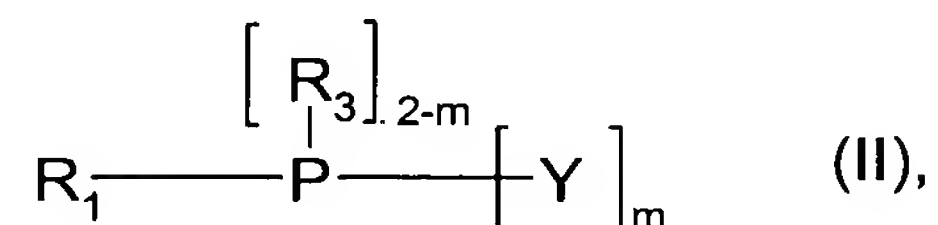
R₂ is C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₃-C₁₂ cycloalkyl, C₂-C₁₈ alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, or biphenyl ~~or a 5- or 6-membered O, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring~~, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, or biphenyl ~~or 5- or 6-membered O, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring~~ being unsubstituted or substituted by one to four C₁-C₈ alkyl, C₁-C₈ alkoxy, C₁-C₈ alkylthio and/or halogen;

R₃ is C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₂-C₁₈ alkyl which is interrupted by one or several non-successive O atoms; phenyl substituted C₁-C₄ alkyl, C₂-C₈ alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, or C₅-C₁₂-cycloalkyl ~~or a 5- or 6-membered O, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring~~, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, or C₅-C₁₂ cycloalkyl ~~or the 5- or 6-membered O, S- or N-~~

~~containing heterocyclic ring~~ being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C₁-C₁₈ alkyl, C₁-C₈ alkylthio and/or C₁-C₈ alkoxy;

comprising

(1) reacting organic phosphorus halides of formula (II)

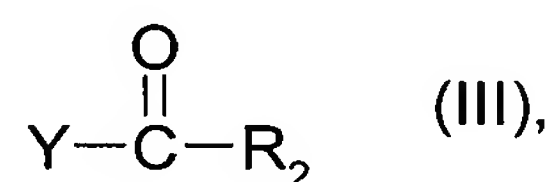


wherein R₁, R₃ and m have the meaning cited above;

and Y is Br or [[Cl]] Cl,

with sodium in a solvent in the presence of an activator, wherein sodium is pre-sent in the form of a dispersion of sodium particles having a mean particle size of $\leq 500 \mu\text{m}$ in the solvent,

(2) subsequent reaction with acid halides of formula (III)



wherein R₂ and Y have the meaning cited above;

which process is carried out without isolation of the intermediates,

wherein the activator is selected from the group consisting of aliphatic alcohols having 1 to 10 carbon atoms, aromatic chlorohydrocarbons, aliphatic chlorohydrocarbons, aromatic bromohydrocarbons, aliphatic bromohydrocarbons, and combinations thereof.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein R_1 , R_2 and R_3 are independently from each other phenyl, naphthyl and biphenyl, being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C_1 - C_8 alky and/or C_1 - C_8 alkoxy.

Claim 3 (Original): The process according to claim 2, wherein R_1 and R_3 are phenyl and R_2 is 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I)[[.]] ~~wherein~~ when m is 2[[.]]; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium ~~alkali metal~~ are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I)[[.]] when ~~wherein~~ m is 1.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to $+160^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction (2) is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to $+120^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein (1) and (2) are carried out in toluene, ethyl benzene, or a combination thereof, as solvent.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 2, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 3, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 2, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 3, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 4, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 2, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I) $[C_6H_5]_m$ wherein when m is 2 $[C_6H_5]_2$; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), ~~wherein~~ when m is 1.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 3, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I)[[R^1 , R^2]] ~~wherein~~ when m is 2[[R^1 , R^2]]; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium ~~alkali-metal~~ are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I)[[R^1 , R^2]] ~~wherein~~ when m is 1.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 4, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I)[[R^1 , R^2]] ~~wherein~~ when m is 2[[R^1 , R^2]]; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium ~~alkali-metal~~ are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), ~~wherein~~ when m is 1.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 5, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I)[[R^1 , R^2]] ~~wherein~~ when m is 2[[R^1 , R^2]]; and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the sodium ~~alkali-metal~~ are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), ~~wherein~~ when m is 1.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 2, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +160°C.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 3, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +160°C.